

Saga

BRIAN K. VAUGHAN FIONA STAPLES

CHAPTER
ELEVEN



image

HotComic.net

CHAPTER
ELEVEN

Saga

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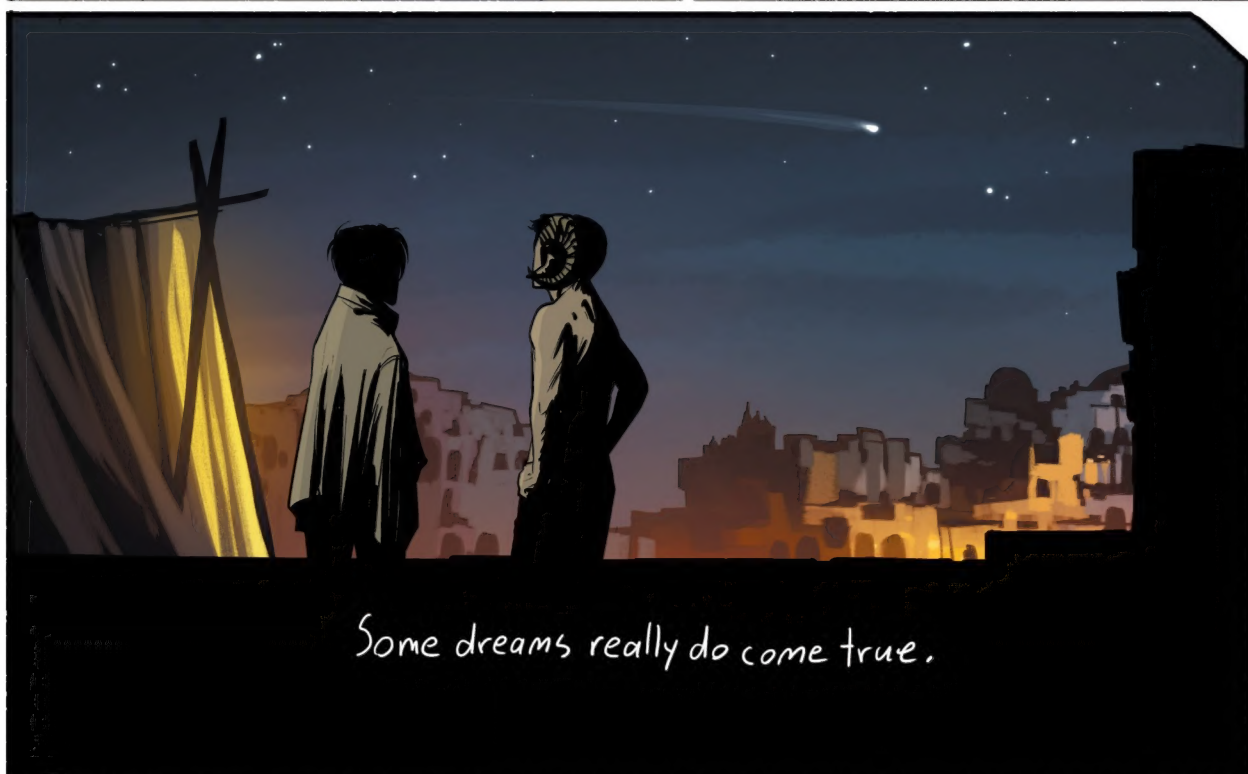
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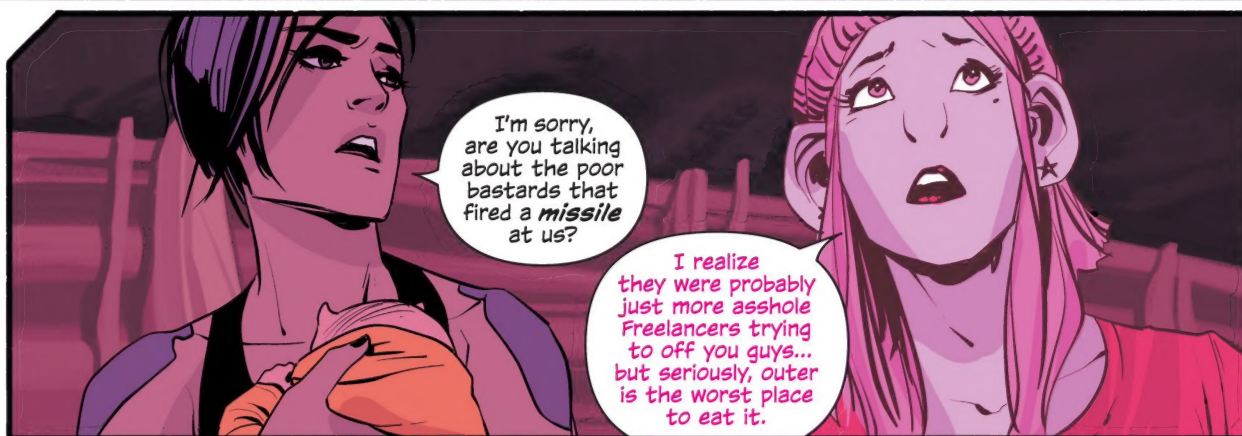
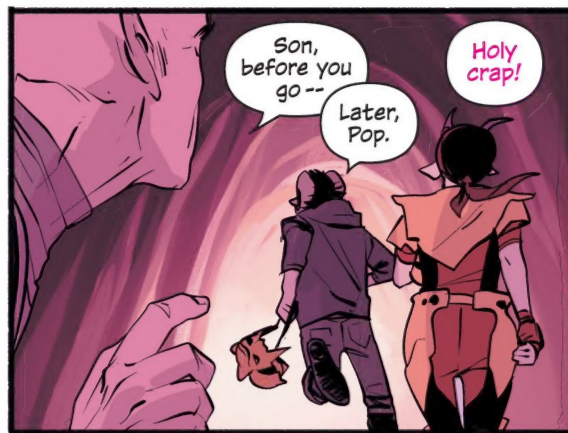






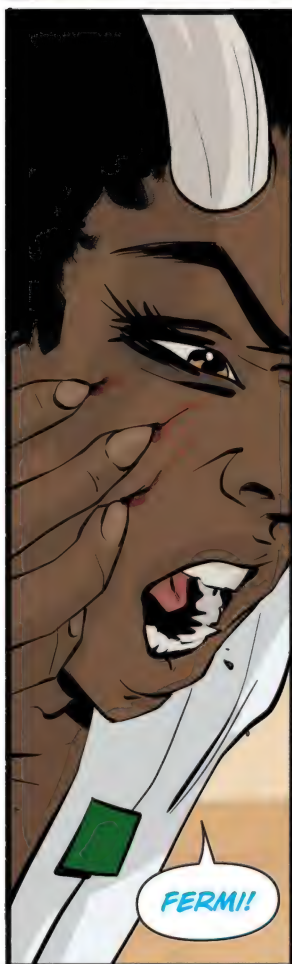


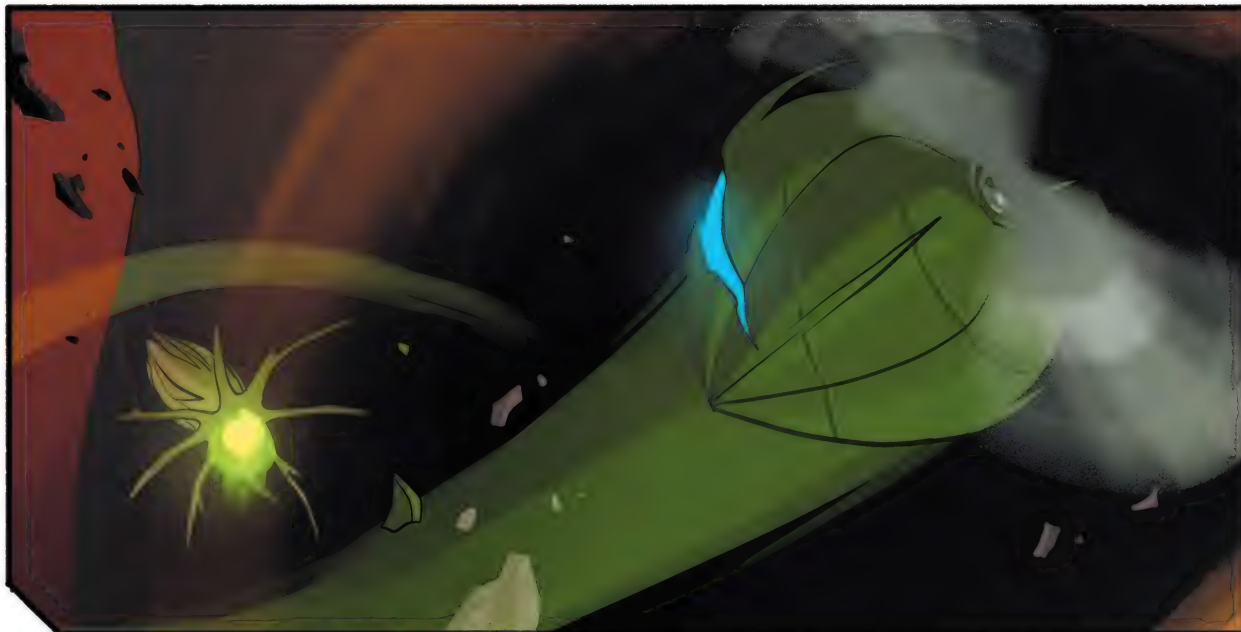


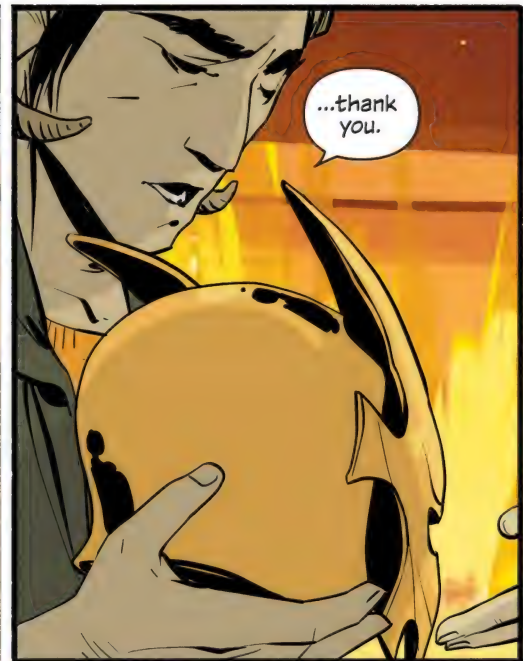




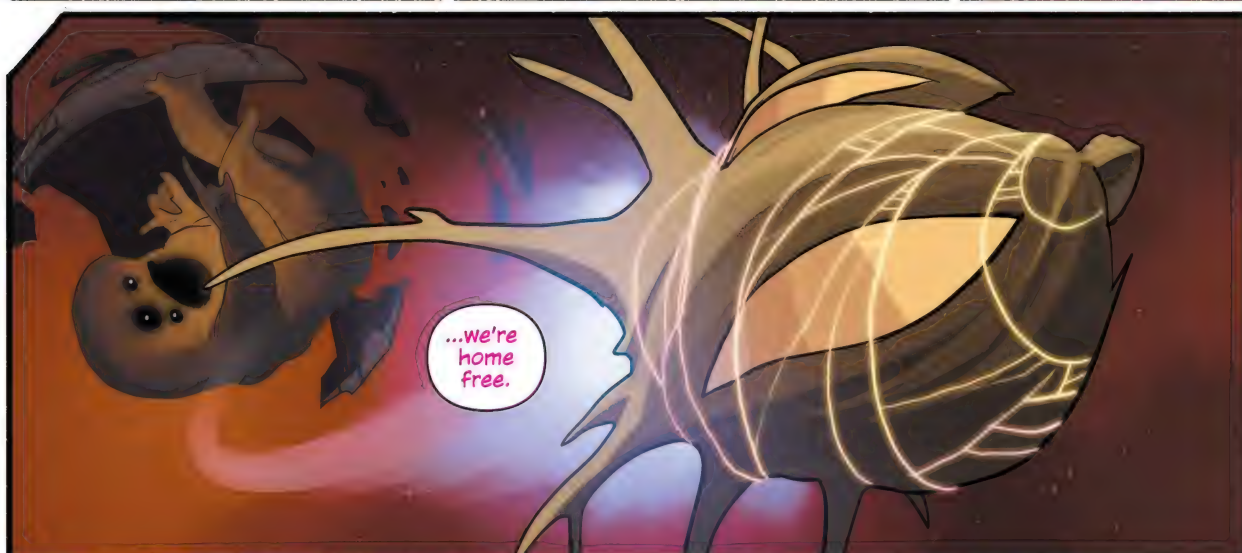
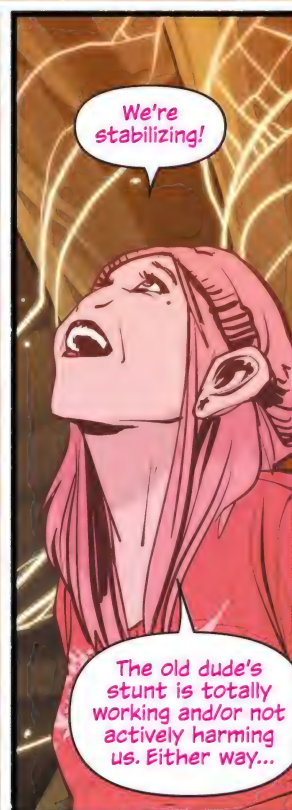


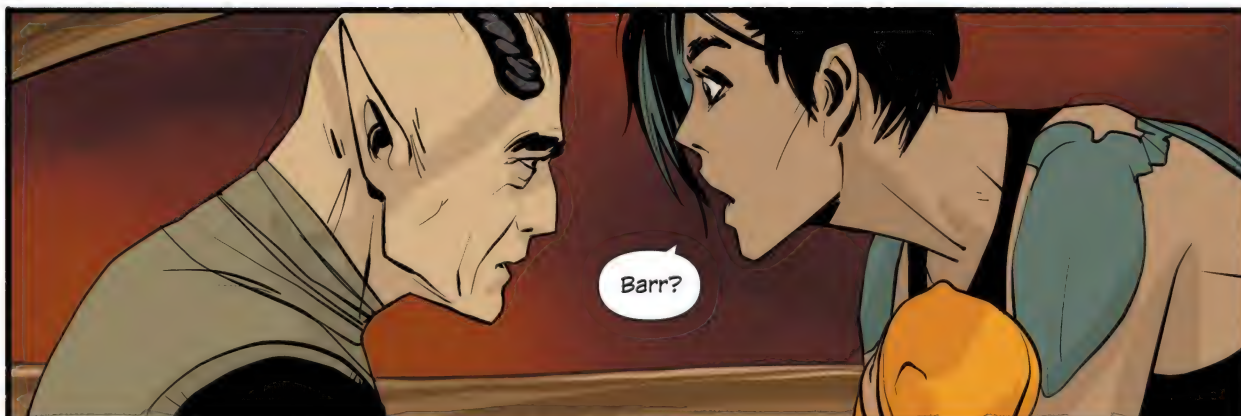












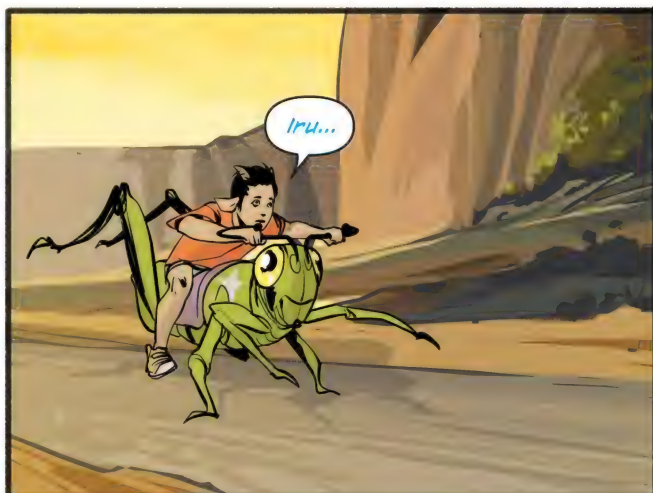














These days, I use it as a bookmark.



TO BE CONTINUED

4335 VAN NUYS BOULEVARD • SUITE 332 • SHERMAN OAKS • CA 91403

Howdy, Brian here. Much to discuss, but this first letter is a barn-burner, so let's get to it...

Dear Saga Team,

One of my favorite things about reading comics is the community surrounding them. I'm constantly looking forward to sharing my new favorite reads and passing them along to friends who would enjoy them. The Wednesday trip to the comic shop is an important ritual in my workweek. Those brief getaways to see friendly faces and talk about whatever is most exciting or enjoyable... There's no replacing that time. To me, comics are as much a communal, as a personal, experience.

I'd previously read and recommended several series written by Brian, like *Y: The Last Man* and *Ex Machina*, but this was the first time I had gotten in on the ground floor of an emerging phenomenon. After reading and rereading the first issue, I knew I had to share this series with my friends and family whether they were comic readers or just enjoyed reading and art in general. The first volume is now a de facto gift for my friends upon special occasions.

The toughest convert I faced on my Saga-sharing warpath was my girlfriend. She's been reading comics since we first got together almost four years ago. I've introduced and subsequently hooked her on series like *Invincible*, *Fables* and *Scott Pilgrim*. It's one of the great geeky things we share. She's not as big of a reader as I am, but when she likes something, she tends to fall in love with it. I spent several months pleading, prodding and poking her to read Saga. I piled the issues in conspicuous places around her, but she still couldn't seem to find the time to give them a try. Finally, when she was leaving on a long road trip with her parents, I left them in her backpack. I received a text a few days later exclaiming how much she loved it and asking when the next issue came out. Since then, it's been our shared pleasure to follow Marko, Alana, and Hazel as they journey through the universe together (I would also like to express my admiration for *The Will* who is my favorite anti-hero since *Walter White*). We've been living together for a few months and it's now our ritual on Wednesdays when I get home from work for me to hand over whatever is on her reading list. Her excitement level is never as high as when I get to hand her the newest issue of Saga.

After all this time together, I better understand comics and stories. When I was younger, it was sometimes difficult to comprehend a protagonist's motivations. It was hard to believe that someone would face off against deadly spider-like assassins, fly questionable wooden rocket ships or plow through a woods filled with "Terrors". It was even harder to understand how anyone could do something truly terrifying, like commit to a lifelong relationship or decide to bring a child into an often scary world. Yet when I'm around this girl, things like this aren't difficult to understand. They make perfect sense.

So I'd like to ask her a very important question this Wednesday after she finishes reading the new issue, and would appreciate your help in doing so.

Alexandra Janky, will you marry me?

Thank you,

Chase Magnett

Omaha, Nebraska

Now that's a proper cliffhanger.

What's it gonna be, Alexandra? Are you ready to spend the rest of your days with a man who asks the most important question of his life in the section of a comic book normally reserved for ads about Sea Monkeys?

Hopefully, we'll hear a response in time for next month's *To Be Continued*, where we'll also finally reveal the breathtakingly badass winners of the Not-so-ill-fated-after-all **Saga Costume Contest**. So even if Chase gets turned down, at least he'll be able to comfort himself with endless photos of adults playing dress-up.

Seriously, whatever happens, best wishes to you both from the whole Saga family.

Dear Mr. Vaughan and Ms. Staples,

Me and my friend have a really important question to ask you guys! We've been fighting over just what the one gadget is that *The Stalk* had back in Chapter 2, page 17. The one below the space shotgun and to the right of the axe. I said that it was some sort of force field device, while he said it looked like the hilt of a lightsaber-like weapon. Please settle this!

Best,

T. Garrett Petersen and Eli Gunther

Forrest Grove, OR

Well, T. Garrett Petersen and Eli Gunther (America's favorite crime-fighting duo), as we now know, that weapon is actually a LANCE, the Freelancers' signature weapon. Great job spotting *The Stalk*'s in Chapter Two, but you can actually see one on *The Will*'s belt way back in our very first issue. Don't go after your lying Cat without one.

BKV & Fiona:

Any plans on Saga posters/merchandise? My comic shop had a poster of issue one that was "not for sale" last March, but my YTUM poster needs a friend. Sell out, man. Sell out for the fans!

Short of making that, stay frosty, keep making great comics, and may the force be with you all.

Alex Rinehart

Ames, IA

No plans for posters at the moment, Alex, but here's even

better news: Fiona will soon be offering gorgeous prints of some of her *Saga* covers (as well as other Staples goodness) through *EssentialSequential.com*.

We will all make them sell out immediately, yes? Yes.

To Be Continued,

You'll be happy to know that *Saga* was voted *Best New Series of 2012* by *ComicBookQueers.com*! But most surprisingly, *The Will* won *Best Character of 2012*. How can that be? Any explanation you can offer would be appreciated.

Thanks,

Sarospice

Comic Book Queens

We're so honored, CBQ! Though I must admit that I'm as surprised as you to see *The Will* land best character at your site. Maybe this next letter will offer some explanation...

Brian & Fiona,

Just wanted to say that the cover to *Saga* #9 was quite a sexy treat. Fiona is such a talented artist. She has brought so many elaborate and exotic characters to life in this series, yet here she's taken one of the most human characters and made him look like so much more! I think we need more nude or semi-nude artwork of *The Will* in this series, and you need to write it into the script, Brian. :)

I am a longtime fan of your work, and as soon as I heard about *Saga*, I knew I would be in for quite a ride. Like many of your past books, it proves to be very unpredictable, big on character development and... hopefully... will bring in a gay cast member. Definitely not suggesting it be *The Will*, but I wouldn't argue, ha ha. And after subjecting us to the *Naked Giant*, I hope there's a more pleasing nude scene in the future.

Keep up the good work,

Mark McCracken

Shavertown, PA

Many thanks for helping *The Will* achieve minor gay sex symbol status, Mark. Sorry our nude scene this issue was just boring breeder copulation, but you can be sure that characters with different sexual orientations will be showing up in these pages soon (if they're not here already).

Dear To Be Continued:

I was so excited to see *Stalk* return (then upset again to see she was only a dream, in Chapter 9). I am loving this series so much, I sent your first volume to friends for Christmas (their little daughter is in college, so I figured they could enjoy it as a family).

But of course it isn't only the series that is brilliant, I love your letters a lot, and I'm feeling a little worried about Specialist Allen P. (why wouldn't they forward to him from Afghanistan instead of sending back return to sender?! I hope you'll fill us in eventually), and about Katie's relationship w/ her Dad.

Thank you so much for the *Page Sixteen*, *SPLASH* script! Fiona definitely did justice to your description (I stared at her art for a long time...you both blew my mind).

I wasn't planning to do a *Saga* inspired costume because I'm in the middle of making a couple of costumes for next summer's *Discworld* Convention in Baltimore (Sir Terry attends, it is always awesome). But I'm starting to think I should try...

how else would I ever get a *Buffy Cazavampiros*...I mean an autographed issue of *Saga*?

Sincerely,

Maribeth Martell

Fairfield, IA

P.S. This stationery represents where I wish I was (on the beach) instead of where I am... in Iowa.

Nice to hear from you again, Maribeth. We were also concerned about Specialist Allen, which is why I'm happy to share this next missive...

Dear Brian and Fiona,

First off, just wanted to let you know that I am still enthralled by all the work you do. I also very much appreciate the printing of my letter back in TBC Chapter 7.

Secondly, I'm responding to your mention in TBC Chapter 9. When I first wrote you, I was deployed to Bagram, but as of the new year I am safely back home in San Antonio. I did not want to worry you all, as a package you sent me was returned. Thanks for all the love and support you give to your readers, especially those deployed. It is very much appreciated. I plan on following *Saga* to the (hopefully far off) end!

Sincerely,

Allen P.

P.S. You know... if you still have that package laying around, I wouldn't be terribly offended if you sent it to the address below.

You got it, Allen. We're all relieved to hear that you're back and in one piece. Welcome home.

Dear Brian,

I first discovered your work through the traded paperbacks of *Y: The Last Man* and *Ex Machina*. The realistic use of background facts against which to set your stories, the sharp dialogue, your preference for long-lasting plot consequences over the *Reset Button*—this is why I love reading good stories, and why I'm an aspiring comics artist. So when *Saga* came out, I got my copy at the March 15, 2012 signing you did at Midtown Comics. Being an editor, administrator and photographer for Wikipedia, I also took your photo for your article. Most of my editing consists of copyediting and the occasional article expansion, and I don't often create new articles, because when I do, I like them to exhibit at least a moderate level of development. However, when I saw that no one had yet created one for *Saga*, I decided to create it myself, figuring that reading from the beginning would make it easier.

When I read *Saga*, I experience it on two levels: The reader and the loyal BKV fan in me, and the Wikipedia editor in me. The reader in me loves the surprise plot twists, characterization and moral ambiguity that made me a fan of your previous series, as well as Fiona Staples' gorgeous animation cell-inspired art. In particular, I am pleasantly surprised when some apparent throwaway line of expository dialogue or seemingly minor character is later revealed to have a larger part in the story. The WVP editor in me, however, realizes with each issue how he's going to have to expand the *Saga* article. "The *Stalk*? Oh she's dead... oh wait, it turns out that she was a major part of *The Will*'s life. Need to mention her

more... Marko had a previous fiancée? Probably don't need to mention that... oh wait, she shows up and is going to be an important character? ...gotta add her to the Cast section... He saves some six-year-old sex slave... oh wait, she turns out to have psychometric tracking abilities and is going to join the hunt? Hmm, better add her to that section too." I'm halfway afraid that Fard, the naked giant, will end up having a bigger part (no pun intended) in the story than it appears now, and I'll end up having to add the phrase "giant pendulous testicles" to Wikipedia. Good lord, please don't make me do that, Brian!

Last June, the Wikipedia article on the new Ultimate Spider-Man, Miles Morales, most of which I wrote was granted Good Article status, which is the second highest quality status (just below Featured Article) that can be bestowed upon a Wikipedia article. I didn't create the article, but because I did most of the writing on it, I was rather pleased, although I wasn't aware it had been nominated until after the fact. Last October, I decided to nominate the Saga article for GA status. I had never nominated one before, but I figured, I created this baby, it's comprehensive, well-sourced—why not? After going through two GA reviewers (the first one, a real fard—yeah, I'm coining a new pejorative inspired by you, Brian—abandoned the review after I called into question some of his comments), and implementing most of the improvement suggestions made, the article was granted Good Article status this January 15—the first ever for an article I created! So any potential new readers want the skinny on your brilliant new creation before deciding to pick up a copy, you know where to send them, and if they start bitching about WVP's reliability, you tell 'em it's a Good Article! And if that doesn't work, hit 'em over the noggin with a giant leg bone.

Keep up the great work!

Luigi Novi,

Union City, NJ

Thanks so much for the hard work on our behalf, Luigi, as well as the fascinating glimpse behind the scenes at Wikipedia. You rule.

My favorite part about my own Wikipedia page is that it has, for years now, listed my middle name as "Keller," the fictional name author Michael Chabon gave me in his original Kavalier & Clay short story featured in Dark Horse's collection of *The Escapists* (Christ, am I never not plugging?). And it's now been repeated enough by other sites to make it Internet True, which is aces by me. Secret identity preserved!

Dear BKV & Fiona,

Thank you so much for Saga! It is one of the coolest comics ever, and it is a treat with every issue! Brian K. Vaughan: I have been a huge fan of yours for a long time and when I heard about Saga, I was ecstatic! You did not disappoint, it's even better than I could've dreamed. Fiona Staples: your art is gorgeous! Every page is just so beautiful, you really bring the characters to life. Thank you both and everyone at Image for

making this beautiful comic! I've written To Be Continued a few times but haven't actually sent them in, so hopefully I'll send this one. I made these shoes a while back, I hope you like them! Keep up the great work!

Your fan for life,

Chelsea Bonham

New Castle, DE



Those kicks are amazing, Chelsea! Staples, you a size 8? Otherwise, these are going straight to the ever-expanding Museum of Saga-related Stuff here in surreal Sherman Oaks.

Anyway, for your highly creative work and infectious enthusiasm, our trusty dachshund Hamburger K. Vaughan has selected YOU as this month's lucky recipient of some gimcracks from the Almighty Prize Drawer: a signed copy of this issue, a wind-up monkey that's been on my bookshelf for several years, a *Star Trek* bracelet that a particularly sweaty Borg handed me at a convention, a Black Lantern power ring (non-functioning), and one of those ultra-rare "not for sale" Saga promo posters that Alex was coveting a few letters back. Tough break, Alex. Next time, try sending Burger some comfortable footwear for gnawing.

Okay, time for *Bunheads*, but the team and I hope to see at least a few of you back here for Chapter Twelve, the conclusion of our second (though far from last) storyline, and the somewhat thrilling return of a certain boob-tube-headed royal...

Thanks for writing,

Brian





America's Got Powers #6 (of 8)



Bedlam #5



Chew #32



Clone #5



Comeback #5 (of 5)



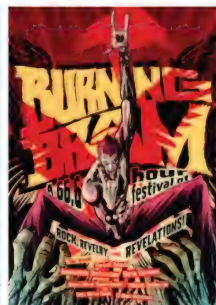
Cyber Force #4



Darkness #111



Elephantmen #47



The End Times of Bram & Ben #3 (of 4)



Fatale #13



Glory #34



Great Pacific #5



Hack Slash #25



Invincible #101



It Girl! and the Atomics #8



The Legend of Luther Strode #4 (of 6)



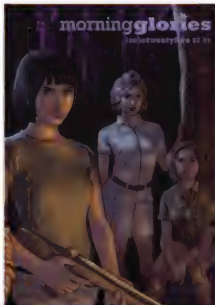
Manhattan Projects #10



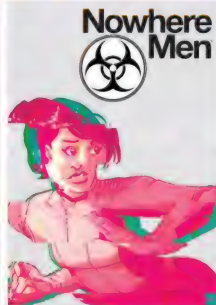
Mara #4 (of 6)



Mind the Gap #8



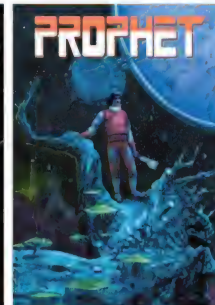
Morning Glories #25



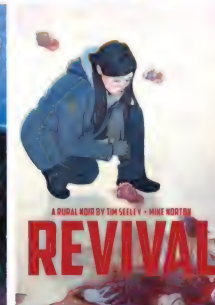
Nowhere Men #4



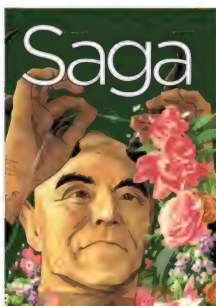
Peter Panzerfaust #10



Prophet #35



Revival #8



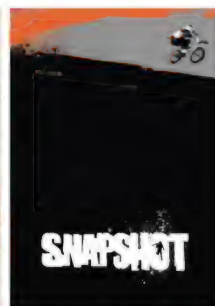
Saga #11



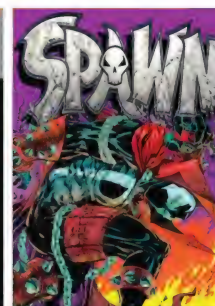
Savage Dragon #186



Savage Skullkickers #1



Snapshot #2 (of 4)



Spawn #229



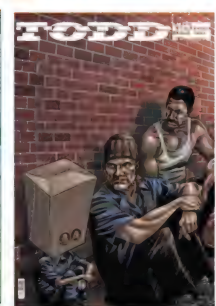
Storm Dogs #4 (of 6)



Thief of Thieves #13



Think Tank #7



Todd, the Ugliest Kid on Earth #3 (of 4)



The Walking Dead #108



Witch Doctor Mal Practice #5 (of 6)



Witchblade #164

What They're Saying About...

BLACKACRE

"It was a testament to Duffy Boudreau's writing that he was able to incorporate the degree of political commentary that he did while establishing the world and the characters of the story, as well as the plot itself. It's a separate testament to the fact that those characters, that world and this story are so good that once the series' philosophical impetus was removed, it was prepared to stand on its own."
- *Bloody Disgusting*

CHANGE

"Change is a difficult book. But it never forgets that it is entertainment – there is always something interesting and strange going on... Ales Kot and Morgan Jeske are newcomers with energy, verve and bravery, but they work together with the confidence of old pros."
- *Major Spoilers*

DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS

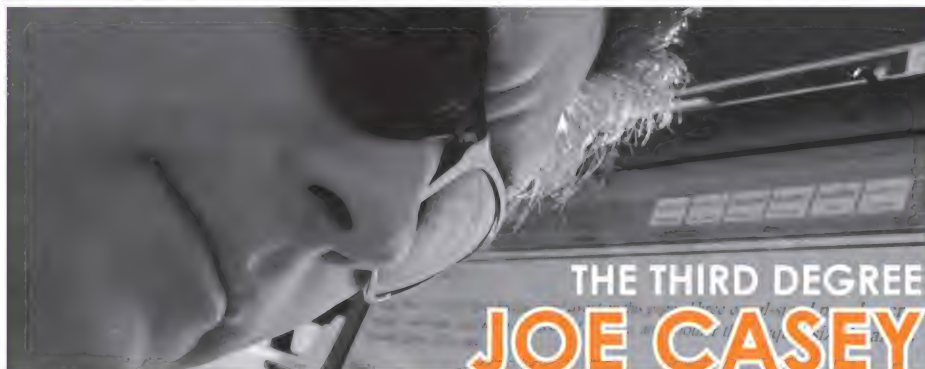
"Taking inspiration from the Mexican Day of the Dead... these stories centre on something other than grief, picking up on the otherworldly element inherent to the singular loss of a person. The result here is three distinct and excellent stories, each remarkable in its treatment of the wild world that lies beyond."
- *Multiversity Comics*

THE END TIMES OF BRAM AND BEN

"The End Times of Bram and Ben is a hilarious comic book that is expertly structured and beautifully drawn."
- *IGN*

MARCH 2013

the word WHAT'S NEXT



Joe Casey started his professional comics career at Marvel and has also worked for Wildstorm, as well as producing an impressive array of creator-owned comics, including *GØDLAND*, *OFFICER DOWN*, *THE MILKMAN MURDERS*, *ROCK BOTTOM*, and *BUTCHER BAKER THE RIGHTEOUS MAKER*. He is a member of the Man of Action creative collective, which created *Ben 10* and *Generator Rex*. March's *SEX* is the first of Casey's Image titles to be released in 2013. He'll follow up with *THE BOUNCE* in May.

What are you working on right now?
SEX, *THE BOUNCE*, the *GØDLAND* FINALE. Conveniently, all Image comics. Plus, a bunch of TV shows.

What's the best part of your job?
Actually having it.

What's the worst part of your job?
Listen, if there's a downside to making comicbooks, I haven't found it yet.

How did you first discover comics?
Pretty sure it was seeing *Spider-Man* on TV and then seeing a comicbook on some 7-11 spinner rack. I put two and two together and got my folks to buy it for me. I was hooked from Day One.

If you weren't working in comics, what would you be doing?
I'd like to think I'd still be making comics. It's kinda like breathing to me.

What's the best thing a fan has ever said to you?
"You're much better looking in person."

Who is the biggest influence on your work?
Can I count myself? Because without me, there would be no work. How's that for existential...?

What is the single work of which you're most proud?
Not so much a single work... more the fact that I've been doing it consistently for the last 15 years.

Own up to one of your guilty pleasures.
Filling out questionnaires like this one. It totally gets me off.

What was the last comic book you bought?
Does *BACK ISSUE* Magazine count...?

If you could be someone else for a day, who would it be?
I'd be the guy who discovers the secret to immortality.

What's the strangest thing you have in your house?
Me.

What makes you laugh?
The idea that anyone might actually be reading this...

What is one of your favorite places?
The original Great Escape, Nashville, TN. R.I.P.

What music are you listening to these days?
Lots of loud guitar rock. As usual.

What is your favorite film of all time?
Anyone who can name just one favorite doesn't watch enough films...

Who is your best friend?
That's a bit personal, isn't it...? Don't worry, I have one.

What is the best advice you've ever received?
Never to follow anyone's advice.

When was the last time you were truly frightened?
When I saw how many questions there were on this questionnaire...!

Who is someone you really admire?
Whoever thought of these questions. I can't help but tip my hat to them.

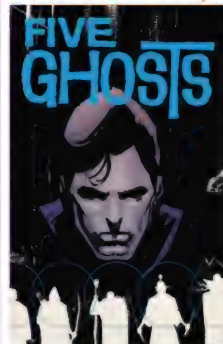
What would you like to see happen in comics in the next 12 months?
That I make more of them.

EAST OF WEST #1



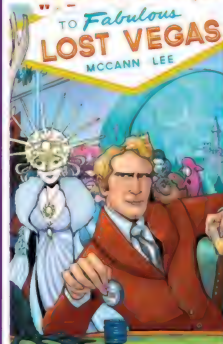
The things that divide us are stronger than the things that unite us. A Sci-Fi Western set in a dystopian America where all hope for the future rests in the four Horsemen of the Apocalypse... who just happen to be trying to kill the President of the United States. One of the most exciting new books of the year, *EAST OF WEST* is a brand new comic from the award-winning team of Marvel's *IF*: JONATHAN HICKMAN and NICK DRAGOTTA.

FIVE GHOSTS #1 (OF 5)



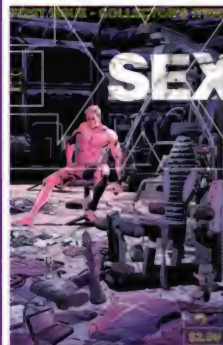
After a tragic encounter with an artifact known as "The Dreamstone," infamous treasure hunter Fabian Gray was possessed by five literary ghosts and has been granted access to their unique abilities. Join writer FRANK J. HARDIERE and artist CHRIS MOOREYMAN for the most exciting debut of 2013 as they introduce you to a unique world full of action, black magic, exotic locales, and literary allusion!

LOST VEGAS #1 (of 4)



The EISNER AWARD-WINNING team of JIM MCCANN & JANET LEE reunite to create a universe filled with intrigue as one gambler-turned-shore has 24 hours to go all in and pull off the greatest heist the universe has seen. Aboard this luxurious casino-filled traveling space-station you will find the highest stakes games from every corner of every planet, unheard-of winnings, and the greatest attractions anywhere!

SEX #1



Finally, a good reason for you come in the comicbook store – to buy *SEX*! Simon Cooke has retired from his own "alternative lifestyle" and returned to the city he'd previously sworn to protect. Now he's just another average citizen – or is he? The term "adult" has never been as appropriate as it is when it applies to *SEX*.

THE DEFINITIVE EDITION OF THE ACCLAIMED SERIES OF
REAL LIFE AND UNCOMFORTABLE TRUTHS

MAXIMUM MINIMUM WAGE™

BY BOB FINGERMAN

"Minimum Wage is an important comic. If I were tasked with introducing someone to comics in an attempt to make them love and cherish the medium as much as I do, I'd give them Watchmen, Bone, Savage Dragon and Minimum Wage."

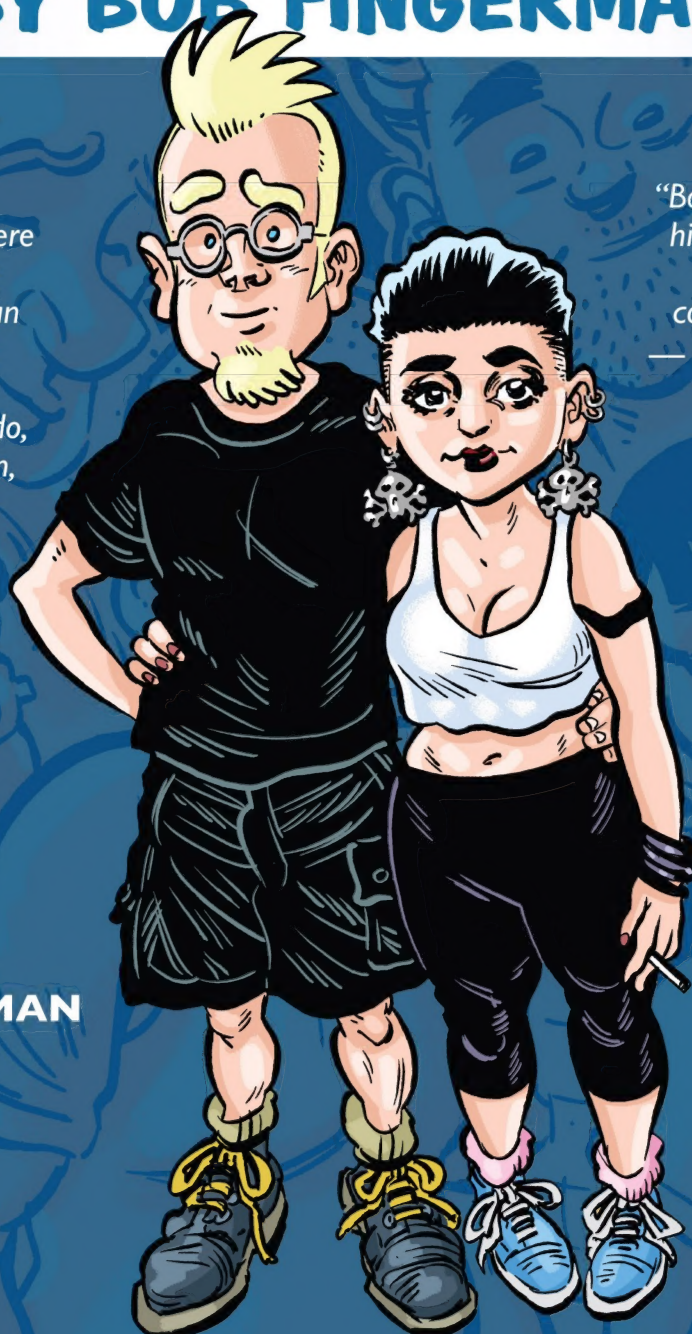
Robert Kirkman
(The Walking Dead)

"Bob's work is the kind of hilarious storytelling that you immediately know comes from a real place — his pain is YOUR gain."

Chris Hardwick
(Nerdist Podcast,
AMC's Talking Dead)

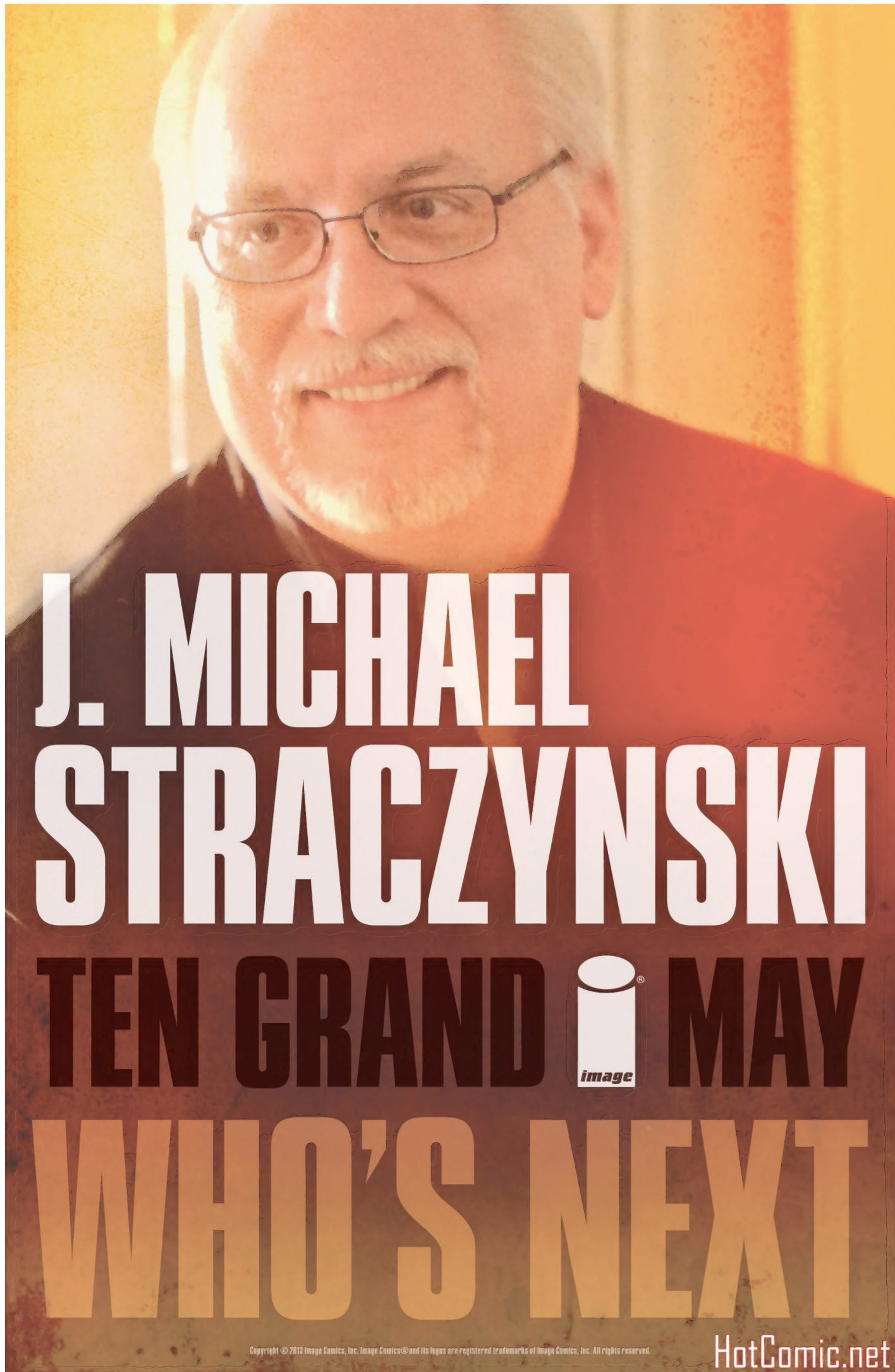
ON SALE
MARCH 2013

FOREWORD BY
ROBERT KIRKMAN



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**J. MICHAEL
STRACZYNSKI**

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